<u>REMARKS/ARGUMENTS</u>

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17 and 21 are amended; and Claims 22-44 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by the present amendment. Support for the amended claims can be found in the original specification, claims and drawings.[1] No new matter is presented.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101; Claims 1-10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; and Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over <u>Ooho et al.</u> (U.S. Pub. 2003/0028454, herein <u>Ooho</u>) in view of <u>Aldis et al.</u> (U.S. Pub. 2004/0039916, herein <u>Aldis</u>).

The Office Action rejects Claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Regarding Claims 1-10, the Office Action asserts that each of the components recited in Claim 10 "can be interpreted as software *per se*". In response, Claim 10 is amended to specify that the "extension request accepting section" is implemented by a "processor" of the service providing apparatus, which is described in an exemplary embodiment at Fig. 2 and p. 23, ll. 12-19 of the specification.

As to Claims 11-20, Claim 11 is amended to recite that the service providing method is "performed by a service providing apparatus", and that various steps of the method recited in Claim 11 are tied to a specific processor of the service providing apparatus. Thus, the method of Claim 11 is tied to a specific hardware structure (i.e. the service providing apparatus, and the processor of the service providing apparatus).

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[1] e.g., specification, Figs. 14-17 and p. 59, l. 14 – p. 68, l. 16 (e.g., the "fourth embodiment").

Regarding Claim 21, the preamble of this claim is amended to recite a "memory which stores a program, which when executed by a service providing apparatus, causes the service providing apparatus to perform a method to provide services". Thus, Claim 21 recites a specific tangible hardware component (i.e. memory) on which the program is stored, as recommended in the Office Action.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1-21 are directed to statutory subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects Claims 1-10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. In response, the features cited by the Office Action as rendering these claims indefinite are omitted from the claims, thereby rendering this rejection moot.

The Office Action rejects Claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over <u>Ooho</u> in view of <u>Aldis</u>. In response to this rejection, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent Claims 1, 11 and 21 recite novel features clearly not taught or rendered obvious by the applied references.

Amended independent Claim 1, for example, recites, in part, a service providing apparatus for providing services comprising:

> a processor configured to accept an extension request to extend the term of validity of the authentication information, ... and compare a stored number of times the term of validity of the authentication information has been extended against a threshold value; and
> an authentication information updating section configured to extend the term of validity of the authentication information when ... the stored number of times the term of validity of the authentication information has been extended is less than the threshold value.

Independent Claims 11 and 21, while directed to alternative embodiments, are amended to recite similar features. Accordingly, the remarks and arguments presented below are applicable to each of independent Claims 1, 11 and 21.

Ooho, the primary reference, describes a license information table 421a in a license database 42a of a license management center terminal device 4a that memorizes license information that including an expiration date and identifies details of a license per content of each user.[2] Ooho further describes that his system includes a license information examination unit 47 that calculates remaining time up to the expiration date per license information of each user, and a notice information preparation unit 46a that generates notice information indicating that the expiration date is near. The user may then access the system to extend the life of the license.

Ooho, however, fails to teach or suggest "compar[ing] a stored number of times the term of validity of the authentication information has been extended against a threshold value" and "extend[ing] the term of validity of the authentication information when ... the stored number of times the term of validity of the authentication information has been extended is less than the threshold value", as recited in amended independent Claims 1, 11 and 21.

Aldis, the secondary reference, at paragraph [0016], does appear to describe that his license management system is capable of tracking "license transactions and activations (i.e., user transactions), along with registrations, payment and commerce transactions, and so on, as appropriate." Aldis, however, also fails to teach or suggest comparing a stored number of times a license has been extended against threshold to determine whether a license should be extended in response to a received request, as claimed.

Therefore, Ooho, even if combined with Aldis fails to teach or suggest "compar[ing] a stored number of times the term of validity of the authentication information has been extended against a threshold value" and "extend[ing] the term of validity of the authentication information when ... the stored number of times the term of validity of the
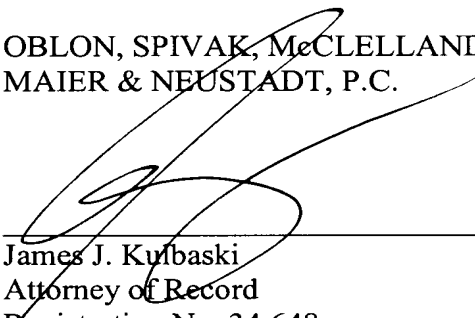
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[2] Ooho, Abstract.

authentication information has been extended is less than the threshold value", along with all

the additional features recited in amended independent Claims 1, 11 and 21.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 1, 11 and 21

(and the claims that depend therefrom) under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing

comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 1-21 is definite

and patentably distinguishing over the applied references. The present application is

therefore believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable

reconsideration of the application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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